

NSC BRIEFING

24 June 1959

CARIBBEAN SITUATION

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1. Long-brewing war on Caribbean dictators has reached action stage with insurgent landings in Dominican Republic [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Amphibian and some air operations staged largely from Cuba.

- A. Cuban, and apparently also Venezuelan governments determined force ouster of Trujillo and Somoza.

1. Cuban support of Dominican insurgents considerable; and strong evidence of Cuban aid to Nicaraguan rebels.
2. Venezuelan President Betancourt also believed involved, especially against Trujillo, but denies it publicly and appears careful to avoid clear implication.
3. Partisans of ex-president Figueres in Costa Rica also implicated, but concentrating against Somoza in Nicaragua.
4. Invading forces believed to be primarily Dominican and Nicaraguan, but also include Cubans.

- B. Landings in Dominican Republic apparently met with collaboration local civilian group.**

- D. Dominicans expect more insurgents from Cuba to land in Haiti and then invade Dominican Republic.**

III. Dominican foreign minister told US Ambassador 20 June that his government considering "defensive military action" against Cuba or other countries aiding rebels.

- A. Any Dominican action against Cuba likely to include invasion by Dominican-supported Cuban exiles who said 20 June they prepared for imminent action.**
- B. Would also include terrorism and sabotage by Dominican agents in Cuba and conceivably air attacks on Cuban cities.**
- C. Dominican "foreign legion" formed early in year to "combat forces of Communism in Caribbean," meaning Cuba, may have been swelled by several hundred immigrants recently recruited in Spain and elsewhere in Europe.**

IV. Trujillo's 29 year old dictatorship is hemisphere's most durable-- and most ruthless. (He rules through his brother Hector, the

nominal president.)

- A. No firm indications of dissidence in armed forces; Army - 10,000; Navy - 4,000; Airforce, considered strongest one south of Rio Grande: 2,150, with 136 operational aircraft, including 38 jets and 57 piston fighters.
- B. Only a few signs of Trujillo's weakening control.
 - 1. Rumor that army chief of staff relieved and jailed.
- C. Despite appearance of impregnability, continued insurgent incursions supported from abroad could eventually bring down the regime if the armed forces didn't remain loyal.
- D. Successor regime might be Communist-infiltrated.
 - 1. Dominican exiles in Cuba and Venezuela include Communists and pro-Communists and the exiled Dominican Popular Socialist-(Communist) party signed insurgent proclamations issued in Cuba.
- V. In Haiti, weak unpopular Duvalier regime is near panic.
 - A. Has asked for US Naval patrol to prevent invasions by either Dominican insurgents or Haitian oppositionists.
 - B. Also considering appeal to OAS.
 - C. Leftist ex-President Fignole and contender Dejoie have been seeking support to oust Duvalier, who now incapacitated by heart attack.
 - D. Incidents of terrorism and counter-terrorism now commonplace in over-populated, poverty-stricken country and an uprising could be very bloody.

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VI. Nicaraguan government also expects continuing incursions.

- A. Abortive early June attacks by Conservative rebels said to have been attempt to beat to the to the punch the Cuban-supported Communist-infiltrated Nicaraguan exiles.
- B. Figueres says Nicaraguan exiles in Costa Rica have now reached agreement with Castro which they earlier avoided.
- C. Nicaraguan exiles also reported moving into Honduran border regions for attacks on Nicaragua.

VII. OAS peace-keeping machinery in area hampered by unpopularity abroad of Trujillo dictatorship and of Somoza regime.

- A. OAS action on Nicaraguan appeal of early June has been dilatory--most governments take line that revolt was internal affair and they lack evidence of foreign involvement.
- B. Somoza brothers despairing of effective OAS assistance and General Somoza says he considering action against hostile governments. President Somoza, however, still opposes such drastic action.

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